
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6532

AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY.

SUMMARY:

This bill changes the date of Connecticut's presidential preference primary from the first Tuesday in February to the first Tuesday in March to conform state law to recent revisions by the Democratic and Republican national committees to their rules (see BACKGROUND). To effectuate this change, the bill alters the number of days before the presidential preference primary when:

1. the secretary of the state must announce publicly the list of candidates whose names will appear on the ballot (from 78 to 74 days before the primary);
2. a candidate may ask the secretary to remove his or her name from the ballot (from 40 to 36 days before the primary);
3. petitioning candidates may begin circulating nominating petitions and must file them with the registrar of voters (from 78 to 74 days and 50 to 53 days, respectively, before the primary);
4. registrars must verify the signatures and forward the petitions to the secretary (from 46 to 49 days before the primary); and
5. the secretary must finish calculating the number of signatures on the petitions to determine whether each candidate has enough for his or her name to be placed on the ballot (from 36 to 46 days before the primary).

These changes also accommodate the federal Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act (P.L. 111-84). Among other things, the MOVE Act requires states to transmit validly requested absentee

ballots to overseas and military voters no later than 45 days before a federal election, unless they request and receive a hardship waiver from the Department of Defense.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2011

BACKGROUND

National Democratic and Republican Committee Rules

In August 2010, the Democratic National Committee and the Republican National Committee both adopted rules prohibiting states, other than Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina, or Nevada from holding a presidential preference primary prior to the first Tuesday in March in the year in which a national convention is held (Democratic National Committee, Delegate Selection Rules 11(A) and Republican National Committee, Revised Rule No. 15(b)).

MOVE Act

The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986 (UOCAVA) (P.L. 99-410) requires U.S. states and territories to allow certain U.S. citizens to register and vote by absentee ballot in federal elections. The MOVE Act requires states, by the November 2010 general election to, among other things:

1. establish procedures allowing UOCAVA voters to request voter registration and absentee ballot applications by mail or electronically for general, special, and primary elections for federal office;
2. designate at least one means of electronic communication for (a) UOCAVA voters to request voter registration and absentee ballot applications, (b) sending voter registration and absentee ballot applications to voters, and (c) providing UOCAVA voters with election and voting information;
3. develop procedures for transmitting blank ballots to UOCAVA voters by mail and electronically for general, special, and primary elections for federal office; and

4. develop a free access system that allows a UOCAVA voter to determine whether his or her absentee ballot was received.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 14 Nay 1 (03/23/2011)